

# Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

7th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Wednesday  
17 November 2021

## PE1908: Review the impact of the vaccine passport regulations

### Note by the Clerk

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Petitioner</b>           | Jeff Bell   |
| <b>Petition<br/>summary</b> | Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to— <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• regularly review the impact of vaccine passport regulations, following their implementation, and</li><li>• provide data on how they are used and any benefits that they bring.</li></ul> |
| <b>Webpage</b>              | <a href="https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1908">https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1908</a>   |

### Introduction

1. This is a new petition that has been under consideration since 4 October 2021.
2. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. While not a formal requirement, petitioners have the option to collect signatures on their petition. On this occasion, the petitioner elected not to collect this information.
4. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered. The Committee has not yet received a response from the Scottish Government.

## SPICe Briefing

5. The SPICe briefing explains that the petitioner is calling for a regular review of the vaccine certification system which was introduced by the Scottish Government on 1 October 2021.
6. The briefing explains that the vaccine certification scheme requires people to show proof that they have been fully vaccinated (or are otherwise exempt) to get into certain late-night premises and large-scale events.
7. The policy objectives of the scheme are to:
  - Reduce the risk of transmission of Coronavirus;
  - Reduce the risk of serious illness and death thereby alleviating current and future pressure on the National Health Service;
  - Allow higher risk settings to continue to operate as an alternative to closure or more restrictive measures and
  - Increase vaccine uptake.
8. The petitioner argues there is a lack of evidence that vaccinated people cannot transmit the virus to others, and therefore passports will not mitigate the spread of the virus.

## The Regulations

9. The passport regulations amend the principal health protection regulations - [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Requirements\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2021 \(SSI 2021/277\)](#).
10. Regulation 18 of SSI 2021/227 states that Scottish Ministers must review these Regulations at least every 21 days. This is known as the three-week review process. The next three-week review will take place on Tuesday 16 November.
11. Notwithstanding the three-week process, the First Minister updates parliament every week on the status and implementation of the regulations in the Ministerial Statement on COVID-19.

## COVID-19 Recovery Committee consideration

12. The COVID-19 Recovery Committee scrutinised the proposals before the regulations were introduced and also wrote to the Scottish Government about monitoring the implementation of the scheme. An overview of this work can be found on the [COVID-19 Recovery Committee web pages](#).

13. The Committee formally considered the regulations at its meeting on [4 November 2021](#). The regulations were formally [approved by parliament](#) on 9 November 2021.
14. The COVID-19 Recovery Committee takes evidence from Scottish Ministers every fortnight on the Ministerial Statement on COVID-19. The Committee is currently conducting a short inquiry into [baseline health protection measures](#), which includes reviewing the use of the scheme.

## Action

15. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

### **Clerk to the Committee**

# PE1908: REVIEW THE IMPACT OF THE VACCINE PASSPORT REGULATIONS

## Petitioner

Jeff Bell

## Date Lodged

4/10/2021

## Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to—

\*regularly review the impact of vaccine passport regulations, following their implementation, and

\*provide data on how they are used and any benefits that they bring.

## Previous action

Contacted MSPs Patrick Harvie, Anas Sarwar, Pauline McNeill, Annie Wells and Dr Sandesh Gulhane.

Anas Sarwar MSP said that he did not support vaccine passports as a condition of entry for domestic use.

Dr Gulhane MSP said he was concerned about the lack of information on vaccine passports, how they may affect individual rights and freedoms and the lack of answers in response to questions from Douglas Ross in relation to vaccine passports.

## Background information

The Scottish Government's introduction of vaccine passports as condition of entry to venues in Scotland is highly controversial and raises several issues.

Currently there is no accurate data available to suggest that vaccinated people cannot spread the virus to others. However, there is evidence that fully vaccinated individuals can be re-infected. Therefore, in my view, vaccine passports are unjustifiably discriminating against sections of society in the name of health protection mitigation measures which have no basis to control the spread of the virus.

There are also human rights concerns and passports will cause major disruption to people's lives and places of work.

In my view, vaccine passports should not be brought in. Given that they have now been introduced with effect from 1 October 2021, the Scottish Government must regularly review their impact, and provide data to show whether they are working. If they are shown not be effective, they should then be removed.

**SPICe**

**The Information Centre**  
An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh

## Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE1908: Review the impact of vaccine passport regulations, lodged by Jeff Bell.

### Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The petitioner is calling for a regular review of the vaccine certification system which was introduced by the Scottish Government on 1 October 2021.

The vaccine certification scheme requires people to show proof that they have been fully vaccinated (or are otherwise exempt) to get into certain late-night premises and large-scale events.

The policy objectives of the scheme are<sup>12</sup>:

- Reduce the risk of transmission of Coronavirus
- Reduce the risk of serious illness and death thereby alleviating current and future pressure on the National Health Service
- Allow higher risk settings to continue to operate as an alternative to closure or more restrictive measures
- Increase vaccine uptake

The petitioner argues there is a lack of evidence that vaccinated people cannot transmit the virus to others, and therefore passports will not mitigate the spread of the virus.

The Scottish Government published the [Covid Vaccine Certification Evidence Paper](#) on 29 September 2021. This paper

<sup>1</sup> [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Mandatory Vaccine Certification proposals](#) (9 September 2021)

<sup>2</sup> [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Vaccine Certification update](#) (23 September 2021)

sets out the evidence in relation to certification and informed its decision to proceed with the scheme.

The paper acknowledges there is a lack of sufficient data to conclude whether fully vaccinated people with breakthrough infections can transmit the virus. However, it does state that it reduces transmission because vaccinated people are less likely to contract the virus in the first place and that:

Vaccine certification is a far less restrictive measure than re-introducing capacity limits on venues, early closure times or complete closure of events.

In line with the Covid legislation, the Scottish Government is required to review the regulations every three weeks, and they must only remain in place whilst they are necessary and proportionate.

In [a letter to the COVID-19 Recovery Committee](#), the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for COVID Recovery states they would 'look at a range of data to determine whether the regulations continue to be required'.

However, in response to the Committee's suggestion that the Scottish Government should publish evidence of the impact of the scheme on rates of transmission, the annex to the letter states:

Information about positive case rates are published. As is the position with all restrictions, it is not possible to establish the individual impact of this scheme on changes in transmission of the virus.

The range of data which will be considered to determine whether the regulations continue to be required, includes the current state of the pandemic, the trends and anticipated pressures such as winter, as well as any surges in infections arising from events such as COP26 and the festive season.

The COVID-19 Recovery Committee undertook three evidence sessions with a range of stakeholders throughout September, focusing on the impact on business, equalities and human rights issues, as well as immunological and behavioural effects. The committee continues to monitor progress with the scheme,

including by taking evidence from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for COVID Recovery every fortnight.

**Kathleen Robson**  
**Senior Researcher**  
**01/11/2021**

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at [spice@parliament.scot](mailto:spice@parliament.scot)

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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